Hazardous Coal Mining

769. SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) Whether attention of the Government has been drawn to a newsitem captioned "IB Valley-Mining Coal or death" published in the Economic Times dated September 2, 1997;

(b) if so, whether the mining operations by Mahanadi Coalfields, has resulted in mass air pollution spreading over the area of 1380 km. causing respiratory diseases to the workers and other employees;

(c) whether the environmental degradation and pollution has resulted in lowering of lifespan; and

(d) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto and the steps taken by the Government to improve the living and working conditions of workers?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Self Reliance in Defence Systems

770. SHRI ANNASAHIB M.K. PATIL: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have drawn up plans to make to country self reliant in the defence systems keeping in view the denial of technology in critical areas by some countries;

(b) if so, the details of fresh strategies being worked out/finalised to make the country self-reliant in such matter; and

(c) the details of outstanding achievements of DRDO during the last three years and important projects assigned to it in terms of emerging defence requirement and scientific and technological upgradation keeping in tune with the global progress?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The ten Year National Mission for enhancing self-reliance in Defence systems has been lauched in 1995 to increase the indigenous content in the annual defence acquisition from 30 percent to 70 percent. The strategy for achieving the goals for self reliance in Defence systems envisages prioritisation of ongoing programmes and fast-track implementation of some newly identified projects.

(c) A statement is attached.

Statement

During last 3 years, DRDO has achieved self reliance in the areas of Armament and Armour. The indigenous state-of-the-art Main Battle Tank Arjun has been accepted by the Army and has entered productionisation phase. T-72 (M1) AJEYA tank has been upgraded for its fighting capability during day and night and for protection. Surface-to-Surface missile Prithvi having a range of 150 km has been developed and its production has commenced. Light weight 5.56 mm INSAS rifle, light machine gun and their ammunition are in production. Pilotless Target Aircraft LAKSHAYA is already under production. Low level radar INDRA PC and Electronic Warfare Systems for the Army and the Air Force have been developed and are under production.

The above DRDO developed systems will lead to a production value of over Rs. 4000 crore. AGNI re-entry system for long range surface-to-surface missile has been successfully demonstrated.

In order to combat denial regimes of advanced countries, programmes for development of critical technologies have been launched. Gallium Arsenide Technology Enabling Centre (GAETEC) has been established and some passive/active components have been fabricated. silicon foundry has been established and capability for microprocessor for missile has been achieved.

Disinvestment in India Telephone Industries

771. SHRI N.N. KRISHANDAS: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have considered the proposals by the Disinvestment Commission to disinvest the Indian Telephone Industries;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) and (b) No. Sir, The recommendations of the Disinvestment Commission in respect of ITI Ltd. are presently under examination in the Administrative Ministry viz. Department of Telecom. in consultation with the Management of ITI Ltd.

(c) Does not arise.

Losses Suffered by Rashtriya Pariyojana Nigam Limited

772. SHRI MADAN PATIL: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Rashtriya Pariyojana Nigam Limited is incurring huge losses for the last three years;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Union Government have any proposal to close down the Rashtriya Pariyojana Nigam Limited;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether the Union Government have any plan to overcome the losses; and

(f) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken so far in this regard?